



# HARPER CENTER BULLETIN

*Williamstown Council on Aging*

**Harper Center  
Bulletin # 255**

**February 1st, 2016**

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## February 2016 newsletter

Here we are in the month of hearts. Everything about February just reeks of red and pink don't you think? Flowers and hearts and cards with hearts. Oh. Chocolate is prevalent in February too. Oh yeah. Never mind!

Anyway, this lack of snow is not a really good thing. Oh, sure, we won't track salt or sand into our houses. No shoveling, no boots, none of that stuff. But this is a manifestation of global warming folks, and I don't care who says that it's not. And ecologically it's not good. Snow is necessary for a healthy planet and everything from our water table to tree roots as well. What about the grandkid who got a new sled for Christmas, the local ski areas and those of us who ski? Huh?

On the other hand, our heat bills appear to be lower and we're not using as much salt and sand on the roads. Still, I think snow despite occasional problems is preferable to none. It's sure prettier than the dead grass we're looking at. Whatever! I prefer snow in winter so I hope we get hammered with snow and leave the month with three feet...if it happens you can say I did it!

While you're at it, Happy Valentines Day...watch out for that idiot with the arrows. Could hurt!



## Books to read

The Book Discussion Group meets on the first Friday monthly at the Milne Library at 10:00. All are welcome, just let them know that you're interested in joining so they can acquire sufficient copies of the monthly book!

Here's the first half of the reading list for 2016-the second half will follow in July. The reading matter for February is "Testament of Mary" by Colin Toibin, in March it's the "Death of Ivan Ilych" by Tolstoy, April is "Two years before the Mast" by Richard Dana followed by "They Came Like Swallows" by William Maxwell in May ending with "Cowboys are my Weakness" by Pam Houston in June. Happy reading!

Interested? Contact Peter Mehlin via email at [pmehlin@aol.com](mailto:pmehlin@aol.com)



## The annual Winter Tea is coming

Tis the time for winter tea party. We started this tradition a few years ago as a Nutcracker Tea at Christmas and it has morphed into this after we were snowed out a couple times. Not your summer high tea with goofy hats and cloves, I think this version is more appropriate for ear muffs and mittens under usual circumstances...not this unnaturally warm year!

Anyway, she has assured me that the tea flavors will be present and that there will be cucumber sandwiches. Then there are all the other goodies that go along with a winter style tea session! Last year the theme was Fat Tuesday and this year the tea will fall in the Lenten cycle. Those of you who don't eat between meals should consider this to be lunch and starve until 1:00. Just saying...

So bring yourselves and bring your friends and we'll have ourselves a winter tea. She's calling this one "Karyn's High and Wholly Tea". You get it, right?



## Taxes

Here we go again! It's time to anti up and pay Uncle Sam what he's got coming to him. Or maybe he owes us...And, holy cow, we only have until April 15 to get it all figured out before the tax mans starts getting anxious. Who wants that? Anyway, the annual FREE AARP Tax Aide program starts February 2nd and runs thru Mid April, actually April 12th.

We're currently accepting appointment reservations-available times for the program are Tuesday evenings from 6:00-8:00. Each session will be one hour long and participants should bring their 2014 tax returns as well as any pertinent 2015 documentation. Remember that while special attention is paid to senior tax returns, individuals of any age and moderate income who need assistance completing and filing their 2015 state and federal tax returns are welcome.

## Do you know what your childhood home looks like today?

Well do ya? OK, the question is moot if you're from here and the house is still standing. I guess at that point we could ask you if you were interested in seeing the place your grandparents were from.



We can arrange it and in many cases we can actually set you on the street outside your house. Oh, and from the comfort of the computer lab at the Harper Center. On Thursday afternoon February 25th at 1:00, Elaine Keyes will show a small group-six people for the first session-how to use Google Earth to go places and do things. Hey, don't laugh. I've discovered that I can Google places I'm going the day before a trip and recognize critical landmarks, like key road intersections, before I get there. There are all sorts of uses and Elaine will introduce you to a fun program so join us!

## Avoiding germs and things

Everyone tells me that all this warm weather and lack of snow will result in more sickness-the prevalent theory is that the cold kills bugs and because we've had such a wimpy winter, there are all sorts of infectious nasties floating around out there looking for a host. I don't know whether this is actually correct or not but I have noticed that there are a lot of folks who n subscribe to this theory.

At 12:30 on February 23rd, Debbie Begiebing, a nurse who works with our friends at Williamstown Commons will be in the house to talk about flu's, colds, all sorts of cruddy bugs and how to avoid them. I'm told that she's new over there and serves as the infection control person. A good experience to host this conversation. Hey-a bit of refresher on avoiding seasonal germs may serve well if we ever have a bigger pandemic...

So Debbie's talk will be preceded by a bit of food at noon, How about shrimp with pasta? Maybe some creamy sauce instead of red? Or choice of either?

## Spaghetti and meatballs and garlic bread and...

February 2nd is just another day at the Harper Center. It's a Tuesday and subsequently people need to eat. We'll be providing some pasta, meatballs and garlic bread-how about a green salad too?

What we'd like to do on this date is solicit ideas from you folks about some programs we can offer through 2016. Some of the options we currently have are the result of these kind of sessions we've dome throughout the years. These actually include our current balance exercises and computer program options. The worse thing that will happen is that we'll conclude that we're happy with the current programming array and leave with a full stomach. The best would be that there are some brilliant ideas for future programming...see you at noon.

## Food Days

In addition to shrimp on the 23rd, tea and goodies on the 16th and spaghetti and meatballs on the 2nd there actually is more...We'll do FTF on Friday the 12th and BOT on Monday the 22nd. Eggs, toast, hash browns and sausage.

There will be ice cream on the 4th and likely on the 11th as well. Actually the 11th will be hot fudge and Marion and I will tell you about a new program we're introducing called Music and Memory. You'll remember that we talked about this before.

Williamstown commons has invited folks for lunch there on the 18th, pasta and meatballs. Reservations please, 458.2111. We can provide limited rides as well.



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Here's a small but very important bit of housekeeping for everyone to know, remember and share. When Kathy Varese-schi retired in July she was succeeded by Jackie Lemieux in the drivers seat. You've all met her by now, or are at least aware that she's here. We can all testify to the fact that she has filled Kathy's shoes quite capably and we're very happy to have her here as our principal van operator.

Notice that I said "principal van operator". That is exactly what her role is right now. Many of us know that she used to be the Animal Control Officer. She's not that any longer and animal questions should NOT be addressed to her. That role now rests at the Williamstown Police Department and animal related questions should be addressed there. You can reach them at 458.5733. They'll be glad to help you out.

We'll likely be beginning a grief support group in the month as well. We'll get you the details when they become available.

## Page four news and notes

Well, as we all now know, our friend Serena is away on vacation and won't be returning to our house until March. In the meanwhile we've made a new friend-Kate Clayton-Jones, an equally talented Foot Care Nurse whom some of you met last month. She will be here on the 16th, there are 2 openings left on that date and 2 for the March 15th date. Hurry and sign up if you're coming.

Peg Jenks, our SHINE Counselor will be here at Harper on Wednesday February 17 at 10:30 to speak with anyone who has issues or concerns with their health care coverage. Peg is also available for private consultations with individuals in need-call the COA office here at Harper at 458-8250 and we'll be happy to connect you!

The monthly Blood Pressure Clinic with our friends from Sweetbrook will be here on Tuesday afternoon, February 9th to check those vital, need to know numbers. Mark that date down!

Finally, the monthly Brown Bag delivery-literally a brown paper sack filled with fruits and veggies in season and an assortment of shelf stable foods will be ready on Friday February 25th. The Brown Bag program is a service of the Food Bank of Western Massachusetts and is available to folks who meet very generous guidelines for participation. Contact the office here at the COA-458-8250-and we'll help you with the process.

